

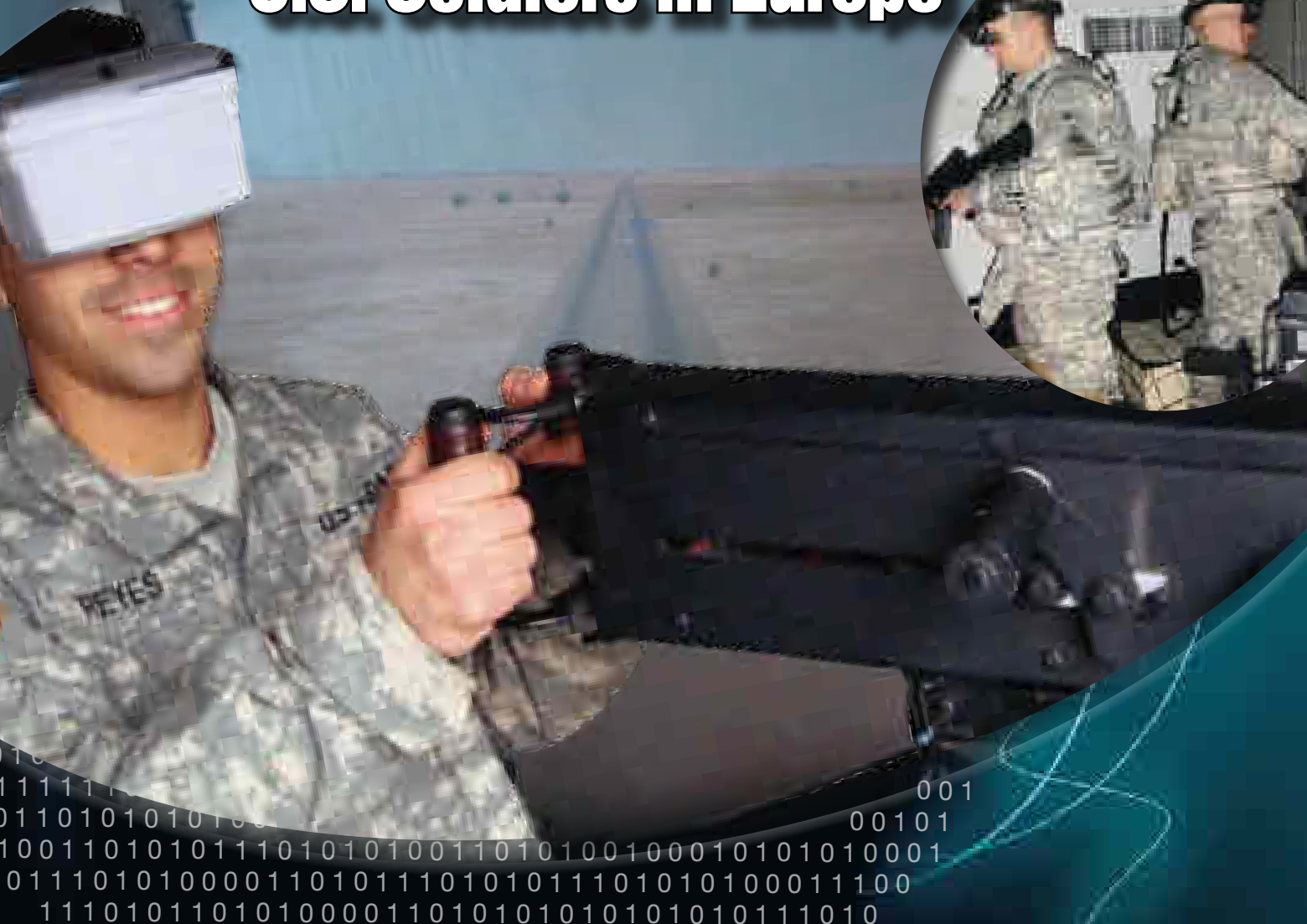
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Soldiers

The Official U.S. Army Magazine

On Top of Their Game!

U.S. Soldiers in Europe

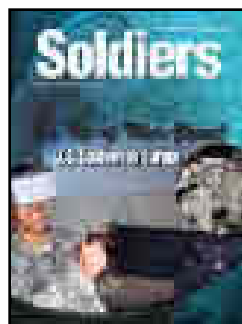


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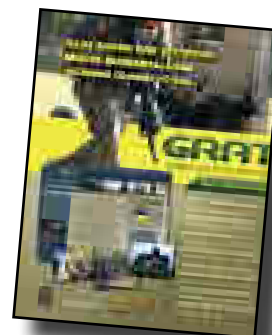
SOLDIERS | NOVEMBER 2008 | VOLUME 63, NO.11



In addition to state-of-the-art training facilities in Europe, Soldiers can enjoy the many sightseeing opportunities, such as the Heidelberg Castle in Germany.

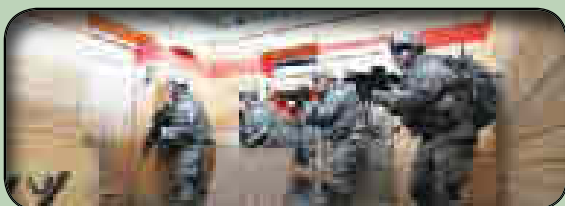


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Safety Poster
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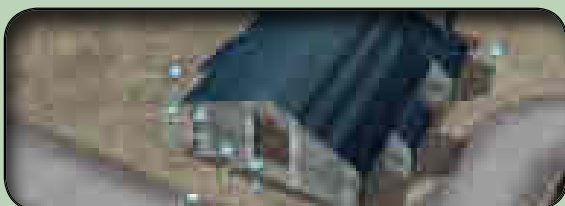
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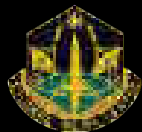
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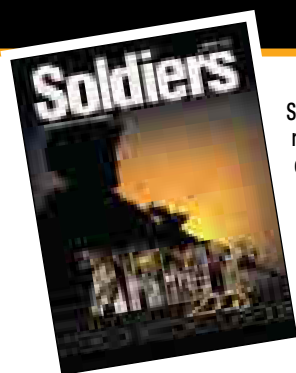
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We Want Your Story

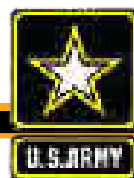
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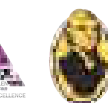
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Darmstadt Garrison



Darmstadt Garrison Cases Colors

U.S. Army Garrison Darmstadt Bids Germany Farewell

Photo by Juan R. Meléndez Jr.

Lt. Col. David Astin (left), commander of U.S. Army Garrison Darmstadt, Germany, and Command Sgt. Maj. Harold Littlejohn case the garrison's colors during an inactivation ceremony in August.

Grafenwoehr

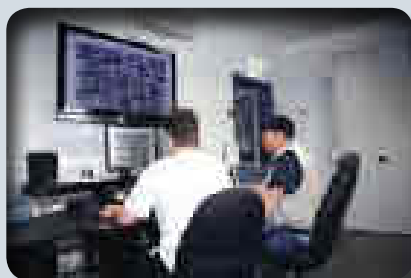
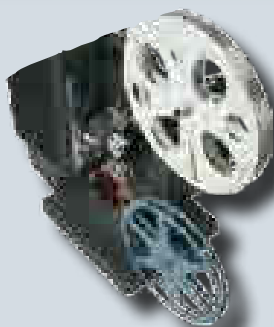
Story and photos by C. Todd Lopez



An observer looks down on the shoot house in Grafenwoehr, Germany. The facility allows Soldiers to practice training in urban environments, and learn how to better secure a facility, room by room.

Shoot House

"Like an Action
Movie Set"



Government contractors control and review the training scenarios that happen in the shoot house.

The shoot house facility at Grafenwoehr includes both a control facility where contractors can record Soldier training, and the shoot house itself, where Soldiers can practice entering and securing a facility.



At the Grafenwoehr Training Area in southern Germany, Soldiers train in a "shoot house" unlike any in the Army. The Joint Multinational Training Command, the Army's training arm in Europe, manages and maintains a one-story, 10-room, roofless building that sits beneath a massive cover from which high-intensity lights and video cameras hang. U.S. troops and coalition partners use the training facility to prepare for real-world missions downrange in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It's like a movie set: lights, cameras, action.

Practice makes perfect. Soldiers prepare to gain entry by kicking down a door, or breaching the entrance using explosives. They shout orders to each other, room by room, with guns blazing. From above, the directors — commanders and training supervisors — stand on catwalks orchestrating proper movements. They coach, mentor and watch as their troops practice over and over again what they've been trained to do: secure each room one at a time, do it quickly, capture any high-value targets and make sure nobody gets hurt in the process.

"The advantage to the catwalk is that leadership can look from up there and see how Soldiers are clearing the rooms and correct them on stuff before they go into live fire," said Sgt. Maj. Troy Nattress, director of training for the JMTC. "For unit command and unit leadership, the shoot house is a training aid. The commanders know their unit better than anybody else and what training they need to conduct. So we don't tell them how to train, but we assist them in meeting their training objectives."

In the shoot house, Soldiers can perform dry runs without ammunition, or use either blanks or live ammunition. Observers are not allowed on the catwalks while live ammunition is being used.

It takes just a minute before the shooting finally stops. Soldiers assess their performance, looking around at what they've shot to see if they've killed any non-combatants, and collecting anything that might be of value to the intelligence community, such as cell phones, laptops or documentation.

Soldiers then get the low-down from their platoon leaders on how





Soldiers make several runs through the shoot house, sometimes with simulated ammunition and sometimes with live ammunition.

they did. Did they check their corners? Did they move fast enough? Could they have communicated better? Did anybody get shot who shouldn't have?

After the training is over, they'll get an after-action review that features videos of them from above, moving into each room. No Soldier is safe from the camera's eye, in daylight or darkness. Each Soldier's performance is on display, and everyone can see exactly what they did right, and what they did wrong.

After watching the footage, Soldiers are quick to adapt their actions so they can be ready for the next training session, or ready to do it for

real in Iraq.

"The best thing about the shoot house is the cameras," said Staff Sgt. Kevin Terry, with the 2-28 Infantry in Grafenwoehr. "The guys that are new come in and think they are doing good. But you come back and watch it on videotape and you see the small mistakes they make that would get somebody killed. And you see the places they can improve themselves by watching the videos, by clearing the corners — all the small things they don't see when they are doing it because they are in a hurry trying to clear the house and shoot the bad guys."

The shoot house in Grafenwoehr

is one of the most advanced, if not the most advanced in the world. For starters, it's a live-fire shoot house. Soldiers armed with real guns kick down the doors and fire real bullets — the kind that'll kill you — into the walls and into the mannequins that occupy the rooms.

The walls are made of five layers: wood, steel, concrete, steel and wood. The steel and concrete keep bullets from penetrating the walls and hurting a Soldier in the next room. The outer wood layer, which needs regular replacement, prevents bullets from ricocheting off the steel walls and back at the Soldiers.

In the rooms themselves are full-size mannequins wired to fall over when hit with a bullet. Each is tethered to control boxes in the rooms, located above the red "no fire" line. And each can be placed where needed to best simulate the kinds of training scenarios commanders want their Soldiers to encounter.

"When they get hit they will fall," said Sgt. 1st Class Thorsten Lamm, a range control officer and infantry branch noncommissioned officer at the range. "What's awesome about these simulated targets is that when they fall, unlike a paper target, you have to get out of their way. It's not just a paper target, it's a body you have to deal with."

Soldiers are expected to shoot only at the mannequins that are "armed." Those setting up the training can go in before each run through the shoot house and place a weapon into the hands of a mannequin if they want it to represent a hostile force. They can also remove a weapon already

Speed is of the essence in the shoot house. In real life, Soldiers must enter a room quickly and disable any unfriendly occupants to secure the room.



The walls of the shoot house are made of five layers: wood, steel, concrete, steel and wood. The steel and concrete prevent bullets from passing from one room to the next. The wood coating keeps bullets from ricocheting off the steel plating. The wood layer is regularly replaced.

there if they want it to be unarmed.

"If you hit him then, guess what? You go to jail," Lamm said. "Because he doesn't have a weapon."

So Soldiers need to be on their toes in the shoot house. They must also remember to check fallen mannequins for cell phones, identification or anything else that might be useful in intelligence gathering.

Day and night video cameras hang from the ceiling, keeping an eye on every room. They, along with the mannequins, are hooked into a separate facility where government contractors run the shoot house and after-action review. They record each iteration through the shoot house, trip the mannequins manually when Soldiers are using blank rounds, and choose the sound effects to play over the loud speakers during training sessions: a woman screaming, an alarm going off, the sounds of gunfire or the call to prayer in Arabic.

In addition to being high-tech, the

shoot house is also safe. No Soldiers have been killed there during training since its opening in October 2007.

"When you go through and do a live shoot, all this is live, and all of it is safe," Lamm said. "I've been through hundreds of iterations since I started here and nothing has happened."

The lessons learned there are meant to ensure that Soldiers know their jobs well enough to keep themselves alive when they go downrange — where every shot fired is meant to kill, the walls are made of plaster and wood, and the "mannequins" shoot back.



1st Lt. Keith Gauthier, with the 2/28 Mortar Platoon in Grafenwoehr, has been to Iraq before, and is preparing his unit to deploy again near the end of the year. He said he thinks what happens in the shoot house and at the other ranges at Grafenwoehr is helpful in getting his junior Soldiers ready for the fight.

"We were in Baghdad for a lot of the urban combat and a lot of the houses where shooting happened," he said. "If I can just get our guys where we are working together, where we are not aiming at each other when we come in a room — to have muzzle awareness so they are not bringing up their weapon and aiming at a friendly — that'll help. And the shoot house helps with that."

Terry said it's the realism of the shoot house that makes it so effective in preparing Soldiers to go downrange.

"The realism is the best part, and I think most people work better with the hands-on experience instead of people telling you," he said. "And with the cameras, when the guys actually see themselves mess up they can say they won't do that again — and that really helps." **sm**

Soldiers enter the shoot house quickly, as they would during a real-world raid in Iraq or Afghanistan. Every second counts.



Training

Story and photos by C. Todd Lopez



Students at Digital University can attend refresher courses on such things as the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System, the Maneuver Control System or the Command Post of the Future.

Soldiers don't always have to carry a weapon, crawl into an M-1126 Stryker ICV, don their interceptor body armor, or even break a sweat to train.

"At the Joint Multinational Training Command, a suite of fully exportable training tools — live, virtual and constructive, are available for Soldiers and coalition partners to use for training on tactical systems they may need to use downrange," said Lt. Col. J.D. Koch, director of operations at the Joint Multinational Simulations Center. "Instead of sending our

Soldiers to the States for sustainment training on critical Army Battle Command Systems, the units can relocate their Soldiers to a location of their choice, bring their computers or use ours, and get the training they need more cost effectively."

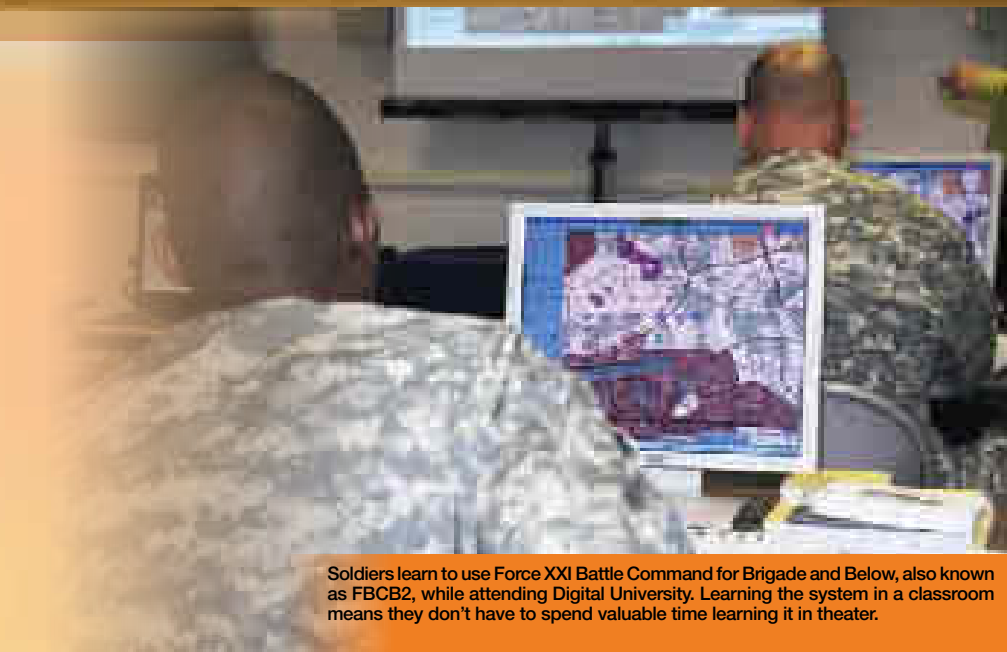
Since Digital University's inception in July 2007, nearly 3,000 Soldiers have been trained on any number of tactical systems, including the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System, the Maneuver Control System, the Command Post of the Future, the Distributed Com-

mon Ground System-Army, and Blue Force Tracker.

The JMTC, which is the command for the JMSC, Joint Multinational Readiness Center, JMTC Directorate of Training, NCO Academy and U.S. Army Garrison-Grafenwoehr, has individual assets that provide training resources for live, virtual and constructive Soldier-training experiences, all under the direction of a single commander. They can be used as a combined unit or individually. Each unit works with the staff to determine their training

Digital University

Sweating



Soldiers learn to use Force XXI Battle Command for Brigade and Below, also known as FBCB2, while attending Digital University. Learning the system in a classroom means they don't have to spend valuable time learning it in theater.

needs and how best to optimize it.

"Not all Soldiers have rotated through a unit with Blue Force Tracker," said David Pippin, the Battle Command system specialist who manages the Digital University. "It's a fairly new system in the last six years, but they will encounter it in theater. Because it's operator-level training here, they will be able to go to a unit and know the system. It relieves the burden on the squad leaders, platoon sergeants and other section leaders to teach them downrange."

The system is critical for operations in theater. It allows for friendly force identification, communications and situational awareness inside vehicles such as a Humvee or a Stryker.

When Soldiers receive the training before deployment, they don't spend time in theater accomplishing something that could be done ahead of time in garrison, said Pippin.

Digital University provides both individual and collective training for deploying units and replacement Soldiers headed downrange. It also helps train Soldiers for pre-deploy-

ment mission rehearsals, command post exercises and NATO exercises. The school provides an inexpensive and conveniently located solution for commanders to ensure their Soldiers stay current on important tactical systems.

"We support the unit's training sustainment," Pippin said. "If Soldiers don't continually use a system, they forget it. Just like if you do a difficult task in Microsoft Office once a year, you may forget how you did it and you will need to do it again. The more often you do it, the fresher it stays in your mind."

One unique aspect of Digital University is its proximity to other JMTC assets. That proximity allows assets like the Digital University to be shared across a wider spectrum of Soldiers. Recently, the school was offered as an asset to the Non-commissioned Officer Academy at Grafenwoehr.

"That's one of those unique things — the NCO academy, the JMTC — all under one commander," Pippin said. "We can reach out and touch that academy and say we have these assets over here that will help you and help our Soldiers. If we weren't under one commander that would be more difficult." **sm**



JMTC Medical Training Facility in Europe

Story and Photo by Don Wagner



FOURTEEN Soldiers are ambushed upon entering a small building.

In a room filled with smoke, the sounds of gunfire, explosions and screams of agony, the Soldiers find several casualties with a multitude of injuries. The Soldiers treat the wounded.

The “ambush” was simulated, but the training offered by the cadre of the 7th U.S. Army Joint Multinational Training Command in Germany is real.

The command supports training exercises for U.S. and coalition units deploying throughout the European Command and Central Command areas of responsibility. NATO forces and allied countries, such as Poland, Russia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania and North Africa, also train at its ranges and facilities.

The JMTC’s state-of-the-art Medical Simulation Training Center is designed to help Soldiers complete Combat Medic Advanced Skills and Combat Life Saver training. The training focuses on the three most common causes of death in combat: hemorrhages, blocked airways and collapsed lungs.

“We train our students to save lives in combat,” said Sgt. 1st Class Humberto Figueroa, MSTC course manager. The course ensures all students receive hands-on tactical and technical combat medical training to save lives during small-unit operations in close combat.

“We encourage Soldiers to respond and treat casualties within



Combat scenarios conducted at the Medical Training Facility teach Soldiers life-saving skills. The training focuses on the three common causes of death in combat: hemorrhages, blocked airways and collapsed lungs.

minutes of the “golden hour,” said Figueroa. The golden hour is the first 60 minutes after the occurrence of multi-system trauma, and Figueroa added, victims’ chances of survival are better if they receive care within that first hour after a severe injury.

Before being “ambushed” and thrown into “combat,” to treat simulated battle-casualties, Soldiers are introduced to life-sized, computer-monitored mannequins connected to a power and fluid supply, making them appear life-like, breathing and bleeding. Each mannequin has different injuries, so the necessary care and treatment of each varies.

The virtual patients live or die based on the quality of care provided by the Soldiers during the training.

Trainers teach Soldiers to perform triage, a process for sorting the injured into groups based on their medical treatment needs.

William Goodwin, MSTC instructor and trainer, said Soldier-students learn by doing. They apply tourniquets to severed limbs and treat blocked airways by inserting a tube in

the patient’s nose and down the throat to ensure an open airway. Soldiers learn to recognize signs and symptoms and render life-saving care, such as treating shock, applying splints and administering saline and intravenous infusions.

Only when the students master the tasks do they advance to the next level of training — combat scenarios.

Audio and video systems record the Soldiers’ performances in the facility’s combat room for after-action reviews. The results of each Soldier’s performance are analyzed and students can see first-hand, the things they did right, and areas that need improvement.

The training offered at the JMTC’s MSTC affords Soldiers the opportunity to hone their life-saving skills in an environment where they can learn from their mistakes, and eventually apply that knowledge on the battlefield. **sm**



JMTC Vehicle Simulators

Story and Photo by Don Wagner

A Trip Down a High-Tech Highway

AT THE U.S. Army's Joint Multinational Training Command's Training Support Activity-Europe, Soldiers hone their heavy-equipment operating skills using the Mobile-Close Combat Tactical Trainer, and receive enhanced training for light-wheeled vehicles using the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer.

The TSA-E's trainers, located in Grafenwoehr, Germany, look like ordinary trailers from the outside. But on the inside they are high-tech simulators used to train Soldiers on tactical equipment and vehicle operation.

"Our motto is 'train to win.' We want to ensure troops deploying downrange to Iraq and Afghanistan are fully trained in their MOS specialties and have trained to standard on mission-specific skills such as convoy operations, information operations and counter-IED to name just a few key tasks," said Brig. Gen. David Hogg, commanding general of the 7th U.S. Army's Joint Multinational Training Command. "In addition we want to ensure that they are qualified on their combat systems such as tanks and Bradleys.

"We have developed the capability here to train our Soldiers and coalition partners smarter, more safely and more cost effectively using a suite of training tools, live, virtual and constructive, and we continue to maintain the ability to export our training capabilities anywhere, at any time," Hogg said.

"Here at TSA-E we provide Soldiers with state-of-the-art training support throughout U.S. Army Europe's area of responsibility," said Daniel Feazelle, virtual program specialist. "The virtual training simulates wartime operations before we ever put our Soldiers in harm's way."

The M-CCTT trainer uses four trailers to train more than 70 Soldiers weekly on the operations of the Bradley fighting vehicle and M-1 Abrams tank.

"Twenty years ago we could not have done this type of virtual training. Today, simulations allow Soldiers to fight battles in any region of the world, anywhere they are deployed," said Kelly Clifton, contract-trainer specialist. "The virtual training allows them to become familiar with the terrain, the operation of the machine and equipment, and instills confidence through training and repetition."

The virtual experience is more than just driving the vehicles," said Clifton. "It's about learning to communicate with other members of the team. It's about getting a battle rhythm."

For example, while in a convoy operation, gunners and drivers work together. Gunners have the best view and help the drivers navigate through the terrain and streets, while also making sure everyone in the convoy stays together, said Clifton.

"The virtual training exercises a Soldier's leadership abilities and helps them to make quick and sound decisions, while maintaining command and control of their vehicles," he added.

Because of the JMTC's central location, militaries from Poland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania and North Africa also use the center's training areas or request mobile training at their locations.

"We are training our Soldiers as well as the soldiers of allied countries, to include those fighting alongside us in Iraq and Afghanistan, to become familiar with our battle-command systems and technology

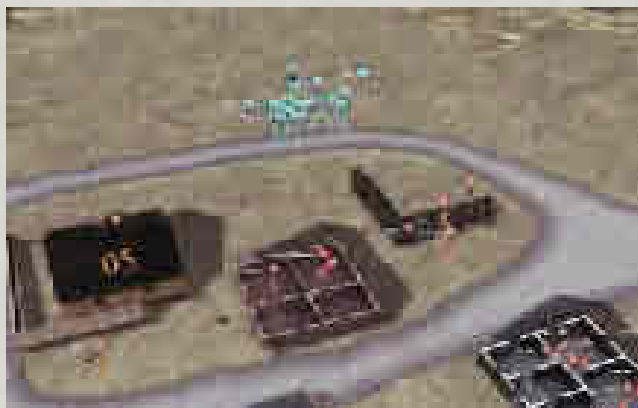


At the JMTC's Training Support Activity-Europe, Grafenwoehr, Germany, Soldiers develop their heavy-equipment operating skills using the Mobile-Close Combat Tactical Trainer. The M-CCTT uses four trailers to train more than 70 Soldiers weekly to operate the M-2 Bradley fighting vehicle and M-1 Abrams tank. Above is an inside view of one of the trainers that simulates the driving and operation of the tactical machines.

up front," said Hogg. "The first time we arrive on the battlefield should not be the first time that our coalition partners have had the opportunity to work with our Soldiers, equipment or systems. We train to ensure we are all tactically proficient and have the confidence to accomplish any mission in a coalition environment." **sm**

Soldiers Get in the

Story by C. Todd Lopez



As part of the DISE system, computer screens display the locations and status of friendly and enemy forces participating in exercises. Information about where exercise players are located is relayed to the DISE via sensor vests worn by Soldiers.

IMAGINE an exercise where Soldiers move around in full body armor, storm into Military Operations on Urban Terrain sites, travel in Humvees or Strykers, fire their weapons at “enemy” combatants, call in support from Army helicopters, encounter improvised explosive devices, conduct convoy operations, and maybe even take a simulated bullet.

During an after-action review, Soldiers watch the entire exercise recreated on a video screen in full-color, 3-D computer animation. A presenter zooms in on an individual participant, represented as a tiny animated Soldier. The Soldier’s actual name and rank are displayed above the avatar as it retraces every step and action made by the real Soldier it represents.

Shots fired are recorded and recreated on screen with colored lines from shooter to target. The terrain, the buildings, the vehicles and the aircraft are all faithfully reproduced. The presenter can watch any player or vehicle, at any time during the exercise, from any angle or distance.

That type of after-action review process takes place now at the Babadag training facility, about 30 miles north of Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase, Romania, courtesy of the Training Support Activity Europe, part of the Joint Multinational Training Command at Grafenwoehr, Germany. The JMTC, the Army’s trainers in Europe, packaged the training and deployed it as part of the Joint Task Force-East training exercise, a monthlong, multinational exercise between U.S. Soldiers stationed in Germany, along with members of the New Mexico and Utah National Guard, and soldiers of the Romanian army’s 21st Mountain Battalion and the Bulgarian army’s 10th Company, 5th Infantry Battalion.

Soldiers at Babadag train on firing ranges, conduct MOUT training, and participate in exercises where they and much of the equipment they use can be instrumented with the “Deployable Instrumentation System, Europe,” commonly called DISE.

The DISE is basically an instrumentation system for Soldiers, their weapons and their equipment.

With DISE, Soldiers’ weapons are equipped with a laser that sends out a beam when they fire, not unlike the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System, or MILES. And like MILES, Soldiers also wear an array of sensors that allow other Soldiers to “kill” them during training. The DISE vest Soldiers wear also includes a Global Positioning System receiver, a computer that identifies the Soldier who wears it, and a radio that broadcasts user telemetry to an array of antennas around training ranges. The vest also comes equipped with a speaker that allows the onboard computer to keep wearers informed about their status in the exercise.

“You have a little computer with a loudspeaker on there,” said Doug Meckley, the DISE mission coordinator. “Audio cues let you know what the heck’s going on — so when you get shot it can tell you if you are killed or injured.”

It’s not only Soldiers who are instrumented with DISE. Vehicles and aircraft can also transmit location and position information into the system.

“DISE can instrument just about anything,” Meckley said. “You can

Game with DISE

put it on any kind of vehicle, from Romanian or Bulgarian trucks to OPFOR vehicles to Polish tanks.”

At the core of DISE is its computer system that can track the position and firing activities of some 1,200 Soldiers engaged in an exercise over a training space as large as 1,600 square kilometers (nearly 1,000 square miles). While the exercise is underway, indicators for each player move about a computer screen in real time. They are plotted against backgrounds featuring the actual terrain Soldiers are training on. When Soldiers go into a building, sensors can track their every move, inside or outside, and relay that information directly to the DISE. The buildings themselves are constructed virtually inside the DISE computer. The screen looks similar to a video game, and Meckley said that is appropriate because the Soldiers themselves are very much in tune with game playing.

“A guy that knows how to do video games, and knows how to hook up his game machine – he’s an ideal candidate for a Soldier to use DISE. That means about 50 percent of the Army would make a great DISE Soldier,” he said.

During exercises, controllers can zoom in on any Soldier from any angle. They can also see when the Soldier has fired his weapon. And when a Soldier “kills” another Soldier during an exercise, the laser itself transmits information about the shooter to sensors on the target. In that way, controllers can see, on screen, which Soldier fired the shot, and which Soldier was hit and where. When a Soldier on the ground fires his weapon and hits a target, color-



The DISE is equipped with an array of sensors, a GPS receiver and a speaker, so Soldiers can be tracked during training.

coded lines appear on the DISE laptop to indicate the relationship between shooter and target.

“If I hit you, you are going to see a line drawn out on the screen,” Meckley said. “If it’s a pink-coded guy shooting a blue-coded guy, you’re going to see a pink line go out there. The system also reports fratricide. And when a Soldier gets killed, you see an ‘X’ through him.”

With past systems, such as MILES, Soldiers could cheat the system during training, even when “killed” sensor vests would issue an audible alert to let them know they’d been hit. But the system didn’t prevent them from continuing to fire their weapons to kill off other players. Some Soldiers even opted to reset their sensor vests by removing and replacing the batteries. That’s no longer possible with DISE.

“The system is very sophisticated. If you’re dead, you can still shoot

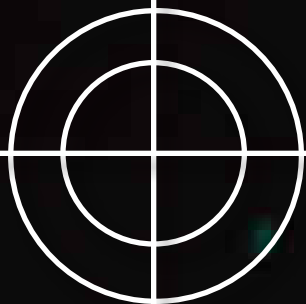
people, but that laser’s not ‘killing’ anybody anymore,” Meckley said. “And if you were seriously wounded, and the system recognizes that you’re running around too much and you’re playing John Wayne, it’ll kill you after 15 minutes because you’re bleeding out.”

During an actual exercise, commanders and exercise controllers are able to watch the scenarios play out on a computer screen. After all, the DISE allows them an overview of every Soldier and vehicle position. But the real value of the DISE comes after the exercise is over – during the after-action review process, where Soldiers can watch their performance on screen and discuss it with other Soldiers in their unit.

“When you see these battles, you say, ‘Gosh, that was so frustrating! I wanted to do this, I wanted to do that,’” Mackley said. “It creates a need for Soldiers and leaders to ask how they would do something better in the real world. In one word, when they see themselves doing something stupid, well you can look to Homer Simpson when he says ‘d’oh!’”

But as Soldiers and their leaders review the electronic recording of their performance on the DISE, they also learn from the things Soldiers did right, Mackley said.

“When they get somebody, they maneuvered right and they chopped up the OPFOR out there, they’ll all say, ‘Yeah, look at him, man! He’s taking out everybody!’” Mackley said. “Then everyone says he’s the hero for the day and what did he do right, how did we set him up for success? How can we replicate that down range?” **sm**



Engaging

Just like the real deal

SOLDIERS train to sharpen their marksmanship skills on a firing range. However, in actual combat, with the enemy shooting at them, hitting their “targets” can be much more difficult.

But the Army’s Engagement Skills Trainer 2000, at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Romania, allowed Soldiers to train in realistic combat scenarios as part of Joint Task Force-Europe, a monthlong multinational exercise.

U.S. Soldiers stationed in Germany, members of the New Mexico and Utah National Guards, and soldiers of the Romanian army’s 21st Mountain Battalion and the Bulgarian army’s 10th Company, 5th Infantry Battalion at MK Air Base, all participated in the exercise.

“The EST 2000 is like an interactive video, which allows Soldiers to practice marksmanship skills in ‘real combat’ virtual scenarios, such as ambush, search and destroy and rescues,” said Glen Hemingway, training support specialist at the Training Support Activity-Europe in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

The TSA-E is part of the 7th U.S. Army’s Joint Multinational Training Command, the Army’s training arm in Europe.

“Using EST 2000, I can tell you what your trigger squeeze is. I can tell you your angle, left and right, and up and down, and I can

tell you what you did two seconds before squeezing the trigger and a second after squeezing the trigger,” said Hemingway, a trainer for the exercise.

“EST 2000 teaches not only marksmanship skills, but squad-level collective defense, and judgmental ‘shoot-and-don’t-shoot’ tactics. It records fire, hit and kill events,” said Hemingway.

Since the trainer uses “virtual bullets,” there are no ammunition costs.

It is also portable, and can be deployed to units, thereby saving logistical expenses and time.

The trainer is located indoors, Hemingway added, so Soldiers can use it year-round.

“Temperature and climate conditions can be controlled with the EST 2000, enabling Soldiers to train in all weather,” said Hemingway. “Soldiers can return fire with a variety of weapons, to include 9 mm pistols, M-16 rifles, M-60 machine guns, Squad Automatic Weapons, .50-caliber machine guns and AT-4s. The weapons have been modified to fire ‘electronic bullets’ at images of real-world scenarios projected onto a 30-by-8-foot screen.”

The JMTC staff is currently deriving tactics from lessons learned in combat and incorporating them into the EST 2000 as future training opportunities for U.S. Soldiers and their European allies. **sm**

Targets

Story by Don Wagner

Don Wagner



The EST 2000 allows Soldiers to train in realistic combat scenarios while developing marksmanship skills, squad-level collective defense, and judgmental 'shoot-and-don't shoot' tactics.

Don Wagner



The Army's EST 2000 allows Soldiers to sharpen their marksmanship skills on a virtual firing range, using a variety of weapons.

Background photo by C. Todd Lopez

Star Wars Training for Downrange Action!

Story and Photos by C. Todd Lopez

The remote base stations, part of the Exportable Instrumentation System, can be placed around a training range to act as signal repeaters to feed information back into the EIS.

Before deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan, American Soldiers and coalition partners regularly choose to train at state-of-the-art ranges and facilities managed and maintained by Europe's Joint Multinational Training Command's Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels training areas.

The command is responsible for the largest training area in Europe and has about 18 training support centers, including sites in Italy and Kosovo. The training environment includes live, virtual and simulated training on more than 44 modern, computerized, live-fire ranges and can support current and future expeditionary forces composed of airborne, artillery, aviation and infantry components.

"We do home-station training and simulation training," said Capt. Junel Jeffrey, a spokeswoman for the Joint Multinational Readiness Center. The JMRC, under JMTC, plans, coordinates and executes mission-rehearsal exercises to prepare units for major

combat, counter-insurgency, security and stability operations in European Command and Central Command areas of operations.

“We train from a Soldier level all the way to the brigade level. And it is important to point out that in addition to all those things, our location really adds another dimension: our unique ability to train and coexists with multinational and coalition forces,” Jeffrey said. “That really separates us from our stateside combat training centers.”

The training area at Hohenfels, known as the “box,” is about 10 by 20 kilometers in size. The remainder of the site is peppered with caves, simulated towns,



The Exportable Instrumentation System includes a tent facility where commanders can conduct after-action reviews.

ranges, military operations in urban terrain sites where Soldiers can learn how to secure buildings, and even an improvised explosive device lane, so Soldiers can learn to spot and neutralize IEDs.

“When we are engaged in a mission-readiness exercise, the towns come alive with the civilians that work there and who live there throughout the time we are training,” Jeffrey said. “They have bakeries, they have coffee shops. And that adds a different dimension of realism that a lot of time the Soldiers wouldn’t see unless they come here.”

Commanders bring their units to Hohenfels to get them prepared for deployment. They bring along with them a set of training goals they hope to achieve during their time there.

The JMRC staff doesn’t conduct the training at Hohenfels, rather, they facilitate it. It’s the unit commanders who are responsible for training their Soldiers. But JMRC

provides the facilities and observers/controllers, or O/Cs, who can help commanders meet their training goals.

“Soldiers come here with a set of validation tasks, things their brigade commander or their corps commander says they have to be able to do before they go down range,” said Dave Caples, the Instrumentation Training Analysis Computer Simulations and Support Center operations officer. “If the O/Cs are comfortable with the training that occurred, and they know the unit is prepared to accomplish each one of those validation tasks, then they are happy with what they have given them.”

The handful of O/C teams at Hohenfels includes those to help train brigade staffs, and those who train Soldiers in maneuvers, fire support, aviation and engineering. There’s even a team designated to work with the Air Force when they participate in training.

The training areas at Hohenfels are also manned by actors, played by both German nationals and members of the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, who serve as the opposing force. Together, the groups simulate





A Soldier with the Joint Multinational Training Command uses the communications equipment in one of the "Global Hawk" components of the Exportable Instrumentation System.

civilian authority figures such as the police, both government officials and non-government agencies, the media, members of the local population, clergymen, linguists, terrorists and belligerents. Role-players are even outfitted with costumes.

"In addition to our standard set of civilians on the battlefield for major rotations, we will also bring in as many as 500 Arabic-speaking civilians from around Germany," Caples said. "Their role is primarily to populate those towns to give Soldiers an even more realistic view of what is going on in theater. Those civilians are complete with clothing from the area."

During and after training, the O/Cs help commanders conduct after-action reviews with their Soldiers to help them learn from their training experience, so they can avoid repeating those same mistakes when the bullets are real.

Commanders and the O/Cs may choose to conduct old-school "green book" AARs — where the notes they've taken reside in government-issued paper ledgers, and the lessons to be learned are read aloud and illustrated with slideshows featuring excerpts from dry military doctrine.

But at Hohenfels, the secret to conducting an AAR with sticking

power is also the key to making the training they conduct there some of the best in Europe: technology.

When Soldiers participate in training on the ranges at Hohenfels, they, their equipment, and the facilities they train in are instrumented with some of the best training technology in the Army.

The ITACSS team, working out of Building 100 at Hohenfels, is at the center of all that technology.

"We can track up to 2000 vehicles and personnel with only one second latency — near real time," Caples said. "And we can see where they are going, so if they make a wrong move, we know."

The Soldiers who train at the ranges at Hohenfels are equipped with harnesses that allow technicians and analysts to know where they are on the training ranges, via integrated GPS. Video cameras provide live video feeds of what Soldiers are doing in training villages, shoot houses and MOUT sites. Trained videographers and photographers, part of the VIPER unit, get in close with the cameras to document key activities. Recording devices log radio traffic between commanders and their Soldiers.

Nearly all this technology is connected to Building 100, also called

"The Star Wars Building," through fiber optics and the training area's radio towers.

On computer screens, analysts can track vehicle locations, locations of participating aircraft, which Soldiers were shot, and who shot them. And when the training is over for the day — or just for the moment — that information: video, audio and telemetry collected from Soldiers and vehicles, can be recalled to produce AARs that allow Soldiers to see exactly what they did, when they did it, who they did it to, and if they did it according to their commander's plan.

"We can record everything that the units are talking about. This is a very important tool in the data collection process," Caples said. "If there were some command and control issues, for instance, somebody may say, 'Hey you said this,' and another says, 'No I didn't.' Well, we can say, 'Yes you did.' We can go back, a week or two after, and pull that audio out of the archive and put it into the AAR. That normally makes for very good feedback."

And when training is over and units go back to their home stations, they can easily remember what they learned on the training ranges at Hohenfels. The unit there makes a take-home package for commanders, that includes much of the information recorded during their training, and all the assessments of that training.

"We want to make realistic training for these guys, and then provide them at the end with some constructive feedback on what they should have done or could have done and

During training exercises that utilize the Exportable Instrumentation System, analysts at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center can monitor a Soldier's performance and vehicle positions from their computer screens.



how they can train when they go back to home station,” Caples said. “That’s really key for us. When they leave here we give them a take-home package with all the AARs and executive summaries from the O/Cs. We also include all the references to doctrine that were used during the after-action review. It is a good package for them to take home and continue with their training.”

JMRC doesn’t just train American Soldiers in Germany. They bring members of allied militaries to the training as well, including countries like the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, France, Croatia, the Netherlands, Poland, Italy, Spain, Afghanistan, Bulgaria and Romania, and equipment and trainers can be sent anywhere, anytime. The JMTC exports training tools to coalition partners in their countries too. As part of the Georgia Sustainment Security Operation Program, the JMTC has trained about 2,400 Georgian troops in little more than 24 months.

The program is part of an initiative to strengthen relationships between the two nations.

By inviting militaries of other nations to participate in training, JMTC ensures that not only are American Soldiers getting to train against the full spectrum of military operations, but they are also learning to fight alongside those they may fight alongside in real-world conflicts. The Army is also helping to build greater relationships with allied countries.

“There is a lot in the news about multinational forces sending their people down range,” Jeffrey said.

“One of the important things here is that we want to make sure that the first time that we work together is not when we actually get there. Our training here at JMRC kind of exposes both sides, U.S. Soldiers and multinational soldiers, to the challenges of working together.”

The technology at Hohenfels is now being exported to other areas outside the Joint Multinational Training Command footprint. The ITAC-SS team recently deployed a tool that takes the capability of Building 100 and makes it portable.

The Exportable Instrumentation System is a portable set of equipment that, like Building 100, tracks player and equipment movement during exercises and records their activity and communications for use during the after-action review process.

The EIS was deployed in its entirety for the first time in August 2008 to Hammelburg, Germany, to be part of a MRE there.

The system consists of several pieces of portable equipment, including the “Global Hawk” containers which house the computers that run the system; several hard shelters called Herdside Expandable Light Air-Mobile Shelters, that house workstations for analysts; and several remote base stations that can be

placed around a training range to act as signal repeaters, feeding information back into EIS.

“We are the only place in the world that has something like this,” Caples said. “The EIS is meant to deploy anywhere in the world. We give these guys the flexibility to do a whole lot of things simultaneously, and I think it will enhance the training immensely.”

With the facilities and technology available at Hohenfels, JMRC can provide Soldiers some of the most realistic training available in the Army; in some cases, providing even more than what might ever be seen in the real world — anything to prepare Soldiers to do their job correctly, and safely, said Lt. Col. Daniel Redden, JMRC chief of operations.

“We literally give them the worst possible day they will ever have in theater, stuff they may never, ever see,” said Redden. “We make it the worst — everything. You’ve got a senator coming to visit, 15 IEDs today, X number of Soldiers hurt and killed, the local population is rioting. There is virtually nothing we cannot think of to throw at them. That’s the way units get better. When we talk to privates on the ground, they say this is some of the best training they ever got. The feedback is great.” **sm**

ISLAND ADVENTURE

Story and Photos by Ken White

LANGEEOG, Germany – For an Army brat in 2008, a stable and cohesive family life can be a rare luxury, especially if you consider the effects of extended and often repeated deployments of one or even both parents.

And though nothing can ever replace the void left when a parent deploys, that hasn't deterred Installation Management Command-Europe's Morale Welfare and Recreation from trying.

In the most unlikely of places – the remote North Sea island of Langeoog – 78 6th to 8th graders found a family they never knew existed and discovered a treasure trove of life lessons and friendships that will last them a lifetime during Camp A.R.M.Y. (Adventure, Resilience,

Memories, Youth) Challenge's seven-day Island.

Part traditional summer resident camp, part experiential adventure immersion and part eco-awareness-based program, the second-year camp gave kids a rare opportunity to experience all the benefits of an extended family, with a healthy dose of adventure and education to boot.

"The way we design Camp A.R.M.Y. Challenge is all about youth empowerment," said program director Joe Marton of IMCOM-Europe Child and Youth Services. "We've based this camp on what kids themselves want, and it's our responsibility to come up with what's legal, affordable, generates participation and is developmentally appropriate."

"This year we've added two days



and heightened the technology and environmental-consciousness aspects of the program," Marton explained. "Through hands-on work with solar and wind energy projects, they see with their own eyes that energy doesn't necessarily have to come from a traditional petroleum-based energy generating system.

"We also bring home to the kids the very real impact of man on the natural environment by including a

Camp A.R.M.Y. challengers prepare to charge into the mud during an excursion on Germany's Langeoog Island in the North Sea. Nearly 80 children of deployed servicemembers spent a week on Langeoog as part of an island adventure sponsored by Installation Management Command-Europe.



provides break for deployment

KIDS



Aja Brown, from Wiesbaden Germany, is assisted by fellow campers after getting up close and personal with an endless supply of mud found on the German island of Langeoog, where 78 children of deployed servicemembers spent a week as part of Camp A.R.M.Y Challenge.



Reign Schuster, from Mannheim, Germany, waits patiently for the solar cells to recharge an eco-vehicle he co-built with another camper during Camp A.R.M.Y Challenge on Germany's Langeoog Island in the North Sea. The camp was held for children of deployed U.S. servicemembers stationed in Europe.

service project to clean the beach of man-made trash.”

Langeoog, a six-mile-long island of pristine beaches that lies off the northwestern coast of Germany, is a walk back in time. Only reachable by ferry, the island hosts no motor vehicles, only 2,200 year-round residents and a colony of seals who bask in a hidden paradise that few Americans ever visit. It's a perfect venue for kids to enjoy and learn at the same time.

“What we're trying to do is also build life skills that will be useful now and throughout their lives,” Marton said.

“These kids are having to look out for themselves, take full responsibility for their own decisions and learn to be effective, not only as individuals but also as a group,” he pointed out.

“We offer a safe place where we can facilitate and mentor them so they can practice those social skills, and they can be effective when they confront these same situations in the big, wide world.”

Camp participants are not catered to. They prepare lunch daily for themselves, assist in setting up for and clearing meals, and help kitchen staff with cleanup. They live in close quarters furnished with bunks and are charged with the responsibility of caring for their gear and other members of their group.


The unpredictable North Sea weather – which alternates between raging rain storms and bright sun punctuated by blistering winds – meant the campers had to learn how and what to pack to stay warm and

dry, a valuable life lesson of its own.

“These kids are learning how to operate in this environment out of necessity, because once you're out here, riding your bike without your rain gear, there's no opportunity to go back and change,” Marton quipped. “It takes responsibility, looking out for each other, and planning ahead, and those lessons sink in quickly.”

Between expert-guided charter boat tours and walking treks on the island's beaches, mud flats and surrounding waters, the campers were introduced to plant and animal habi-





tats, discussing everything from the effect of tides to the chemistry of mud. The black, tar-like island mud, used in pricey skin treatments at local wellness centers, has another far less scientific attraction.

“We have a couple of kids that returned from last year’s camp; the first thing they asked is, ‘are we going to do the mud?’” said Marton. “I think it’s so popular because they’re away from home and it’s a license to get dirty ... not only for the kids but the adults.”

The camp is a study in perpetual motion that demands a symphony of behind-the-scenes logistical and programming coordination to move, lodge and feed campers to make the experience something they will always remember.

The task of moving kids to the camp from garrisons all across Europe involved buses, trains, bicycles, ferries and even horse-drawn carriages, a successful endeavor that Marton explained is due to Army children always responding to challenges with a proactive, enthusiastic and positive attitude.

Mud-caked campers gather to listen to a local guide describe the wealth of marine life on the island’s mud flats. The campers, children of deployed U.S. servicemembers stationed in Europe, participated in a program called Camp A.R.M.Y. Challenge.

In truth, detailed planning for the camp began in earnest with risk assessments more than a year ago to ensure IMCOM-Europe provided the safest, most positive environment for participants.

“Some people might think that taking 78 kids out to a desolate island with no motor vehicles is a crazy idea,” noted Marton. “But this is paradise for a kid with limitless room to enjoy, and when you’re here you quickly realize that it’s a safer environment than many of the more traditional youth programs you might encounter elsewhere.”

The camp included a fitness regimen called “Up with the Sun” to give participants a sense of the physical training their deployed Soldier parent experiences. Activities at 6:30 a.m. ranged from beachcombing to team sports, and reinforced the fundamental value of fitness as a key component of a healthy lifestyle. The group used a colossal fleet of rental bicycles to carry it from its base in an island youth hostel to the various programming locations on the island, an added fitness tool.

“The only way to get around on this island is on bike, on foot or on the hoof. And the added benefit is they’re also learning that riding a bike is a great means of practical transpor-



Peiper Murphy, from Heidelberg, Germany, takes a turn at the wheel of a North Sea fishing boat during a week-long Camp A.R.M.Y. island adventure for children of deployed servicemembers in Europe.

tation,” said Marton, a point echoed by the kids themselves.

“In Wiesbaden everything’s within walking distance,” related camper Aja Brown. “The biggest benefit for me is that I’m actually getting in pretty good shape because we’re biking everywhere – about 20 kilometers (12 miles) a day.”

Friend Leke’dra Leath, also from Wiesbaden, Germany, learned an additional fitness lesson, saying “it’s pretty cool because we get to go everywhere. But the bikes are kind of hard to ride; I’m kind of sore in the morning.”

A 20-person cadre of college and post-college-age counselors, provided as part of an Army contract with the University of Northern Iowa, formed the backbone of the staff. Having completed a rigorous training package just to be a part of the program, these counselors were on call 24 hours a day throughout the week.

Camp coordinator Justin Grayson, a 2003 Florida A&M grad and eight-year veteran of military camps spanning the globe from Sardinia to Japan to the States, is quick to note what made this particular camp special among the many he has overseen.

“This is a unique group, in particular because these kids’ parents are





Camp A.R.M.Y. Challenge campers bicycle to an event on Germany's Langeoog Island in the North Sea. The campers were participating in Installation Management Command-Europe's Island Adventure camp for children of deployed servicemembers.

in the danger zone, and you see a lot more smiles at the end from kids who weren't smiling when they got here," he said. "They come in very hesitant, with their guard up, and very quickly they get extremely excited and happy ... that's what I love to see."

Grayson was quick to discuss what motivates him and keeps him working in these camps.

"I simply can't stay away," said the one-time interning producer for Peter Jennings on ABC World News Tonight. "I see a lot of similarities with kids in the States as far as the challenges go, but this is the most rewarding job I've ever had. When I'm sitting at home in my cubicle working, I'm always thinking about how I'd rather be out here with a bunch of kids."

Fellow counselors are quick to recognize what distinguishes the

Army kids from others they have been involved with.

"They love to compliment us and they are truly amazing kids," exclaimed first-year counselor Erin Warnecke. "This is my first time outside of the States and what jumps out at me immediately about these kids is how well they listen to me, and how very well behaved they are. I always get the 'Yes, ma'am,' and I've never experienced that before."

The quick-win for the staff is watching kids – strangers before arriving here – come together and gel as a team so quickly.

"The phenomenal thing that you see is an immediate bonding where they're sharing and supporting one another with enthusiasm and excitement," said Marton.

"I can't help but look at them and wonder why does it take adults so

long to learn how to work together as a team, and I realize we adults can learn something from these kids," he added.

And if the comments of kids are any indication, the camp has indeed exceeded its goals.

"Where I come from a lot of kids don't get a lot of chances in life to do this kind of thing," said Armando Saldaña from Vilseck, Germany. "This is my first time ever being to a beach or being on a boat at sea. It's really opened my eyes to new things that I can take with me and put to use at home or anywhere else I go."

For Tina Delgado, of Mannheim, Germany, who's farther away from her mom than she's ever been, her enjoyment is also clear. "The counselors are really cool and I love the bike riding because I feel like nothing can bother me ... and I can't wait to get in the mud tomorrow!" she said.

Leon Terry, from Brussels, Belgium, was quick to caveat his endorsement of the camp as "totally cool" with his utter disappointment at not being able to stay up past the 10 p.m. curfew, while Wiesbaden's Leath revealed her favorite thing as being able to stay up all night just talking with her new friends.

One thing is evident: Europe's deployed Soldiers won't be the only ones telling "war stories" when they are reunited with their families — their children will have a few of their own.

"At first when mom signed me up for it, I was thinking, 'oh great, she's sending me to boot camp,'" laughed Brown. "I didn't actually find out where we were going until five minutes before we got on the bus, but a counselor told me we were going to an island, and I thought, 'wow, this might actually be a fun vacation after all.'" **sm**

Ken White works for the IMCOM-Europe Public Affairs Office.

Seals that call the North Sea home stare back at Camp A.R.M.Y. Challenge youngsters passing by in a fishing boat during an island adventure sponsored by Installation Management Command-Europe.







Iraq

Sgt. Whitney Houston, Public Affairs Office, 25th Infantry Division, sits in a Stryker armored vehicle decorated with a hint of patriotism.

— Photo by Spc. Daniel Herrera



Army Adopts New Service Uniform

It's official: The green service uniform is on its way out and in its place will be a variation of the dress blue uniform.

Official word on the new "Army Service Uniform," or ASU, was released Aug. 20 in a message to all Army activities. The message defines the wear policy and the "bridging" strategy for transition to the new uniform.

"It's a culmination of transformation efforts that started in 2004," said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, of the new ASU. "We had three 'Class A'-style uniforms, all the same style jacket, with just a different color — the policies on how we wore accoutrements on them were differ-

ent. We asked the question — if we wear one only, which would it be? And the blue uniform was the most popular of the three."

The new ASU coat, similar to the existing blue coat, will be made of a wrinkle-resistant material and have a more "athletic" cut.

Other changes to the uniform include authorization of a combat service identification badge and overseas service bars on the jacket sleeve for both enlisted and officers, the wear of distinctive unit insignia on the shoulder loops of the blue coat for enlisted, authorizing paratroopers to wear the black jump boots with the blue ASU, and the decision to transition to a new short-sleeve and long-sleeve white shirt with shoulder loops.

It is also permissible for enlisted to wear both overseas service bars and service stripes on the new blue ASU coat. Officers and Soldiers in the grade of corporal and above will additionally wear a gold braid on their slacks to indicate leadership roles.

"That is kind of a right of passage as you transition from being a (junior) enlisted Soldier to a noncommissioned officer," Preston said of the gold braid.

New items for the ASU will be available in military clothing sales after July 2009.

Soldiers will be expected to possess the entire uniform by July 2014. The two key components of the uniform, the coat and slacks, are expected to cost about \$140, with modifications bringing the total cost to \$200. Enlisted Soldiers will receive an increase in their annual uniform allowance to help offset the cost of the uniform, officials said.

— ARNEWS/C. Todd Lopez

Sgt. Maj. Phil Prater



The new Army Service Uniform is based on the Army's current dress blue uniform and will replace the white, blue and green service uniforms. Paratroopers are authorized to wear the black combat boots with the new ASU.

Interactive DVD to Help Soldiers

A new interactive DVD scheduled for release this month will allow Soldiers to practice how they would aid potential suicide victims, said one of the Army's leading psychiatrists.

"Unfortunately, the numbers of suicides in the Army continue to go up," said Col. Elspeth C. Ritchie, director of the Army Medical Department's Strategic Communications and former psychiatry consultant to the Army's surgeon general. She said the Army had a high of 115 suicides last year.

Ritchie said the Army's recent push on suicide awareness has awakened Soldiers to the potential problem, but added that many still don't know what to do about it — how to approach someone in need.

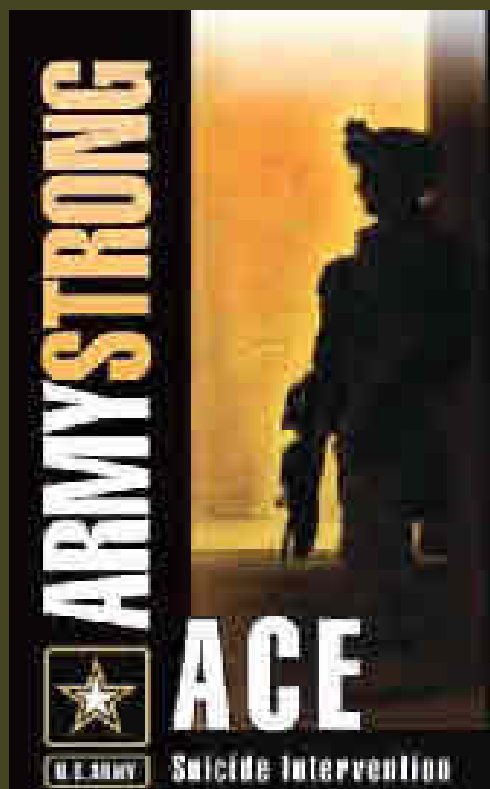
The new DVD, or "virtual experience immersive learning simulation," follows the lives of two Soldiers, and their stories change based on input from the viewer.

If the viewer says the wrong thing and gets bad results, Ritchie said the DVD will allow the trainee to re-do the vignette until the outcome is more favorable.

The DVD was developed by Lincoln University in Missouri and WILL Interactive. Ritchie said thousands of them will be distributed to Soldiers.

Vignettes are also available on the Web page of the Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, Ritchie pointed out. The CHPPM training offers printed vignettes, each asking at the bottom how the reader would respond and offering multiple-choice answers.

rs Prevent Suicides



Also available on the CHPPM site are suicide prevention posters, with slogans such as “Never accept defeat” and “Never leave a fallen comrade.”

The Web site also has a downloadable six-panel “Leader’s Guide to Suicide Prevention.” And it has the ACE Suicide Intervention Tipcard.

ACE stands for “ask, care and escort” and those are the recommended steps for providing assistance to a Soldier at risk, Ritchie said. She said the Soldier should be escorted to a chaplain, a psychiatrist or another care provider.
— ARNEWS/Gary Sheftick

Army Prep School helps recruits get GEDs

The Army Preparatory School at Fort Jackson, S.C., can teach up to 240 students at a time and prepare them to earn a Certificate of General Educational Development, or GED, so they may move on to basic combat training.

In an effort to improve recruitment numbers, the Army has been authorized to enlist a number of candidates without high school diplomas or GEDs and educate them.

“After four weeks of school, if they earn their GED, DOD is letting us recode them as a Tier II so they may move on to basic training,” said Lt. Col. Val Siegfried, Army G-1 branch chief for enlisted accessions.

Students at the prep school, which opened in August, are either E-1s or E-2s, depending on their enlistment contract. In order to move on from the school and into basic combat training, they must test for and earn the GED certificate in two tries.

“We give them a detour here; instead of sending them to basic training, they come to my school,” said Capt. Brian Gaddis, company commander, Army Preparatory School.

Soldiers enrolled at the prep school wear uniforms, get up early, do physical training and go to class.

They spend evenings studying.

“Our focus here is to hurry up and get them to basic training,” Gaddis said. “All these Soldiers have a desire to get there — to begin life in the Army as everybody knows it.”

In the schoolhouse, students work mostly on their own and at their own pace.

“Our program is more of an independent adult education study,” Gaddis said.

“Theoretically, they could spend less than a week in class here — if they come to us ready to test out already,” Gaddis said.

In addition to the education curriculum, students at the school are taught some military education as well.

“We do throw in a one-hour military class every day,” he said. “We include everything from drilling ceremony to first aid to basic map reading.”

“We also do the military class as part of the soldierization process. Those who join the Army don’t envision themselves in a classroom doing math, they see themselves learning the skills every Soldier needs for combat.”
— ARNEWS/C. Todd Lopez

Army Prep School instructor, Tom Gandy, reviews coursework with Pvt. Kyle Rucker.



Soldiers

Story by Kim Gillespie & Andy Spendlove

Enjoy Benefits of Proximity to...



rm Webefotografie



Susanne Bartsch



Gerri Young

(Top photo) Grafenwoehr's physical fitness barracks features a gymnasium, indoor track, rock-climbing wall, and a variety of modern training equipment. (Left) One of Grafenwoehr's 12 new single-Soldier barracks, featuring the new Army 1+1 standard. (Right) A \$38 million shopping complex, which houses a state-of-the-art commissary and post exchange, opened at Grafenwoehr in 2007.

THE U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr is quickly becoming the premier Army base in Europe in virtually every respect. The transformation that began in 2002 with a modest \$25-million appropriation from Congress, has expanded to more than \$1.3 billion as a result of additional congressional appropriations, and funding from the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, Defense Commissary Agency, Department of Defense Schools, host-nation reimbursement and private

investment in housing areas.

"USAG Grafenwoehr has truly been 'transformed' with the investments that have been made in its infrastructure," Col. Brian T. Boyle, U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr commander said. "Grafenwoehr is no longer one of the Army's best kept secrets with its rural lifestyle. Rather the infrastructure has grown to support close to three full brigades of Soldiers, all in less than five years. We certainly aren't a quiet area anymore," he added.

Originally, under the 100th Area Support Group, the Grafenwoehr and Vilseck communities were administered by separate base support battalions. As the base support battalions were inactivated and the 100th ASG took control of both communities, the plan was to prepare Vilseck for the 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment and Grafenwoehr for Theater Enabling commands (military police, engineer, and signal units).

Boyle took command of the ASG in 2005, and by the next summer, the

Grafenwoehr Ranges



regiment was moved to the Vilseck side of the newly formed USAG Grafenwoehr, where the unit trained at the Grafenwoehr Training Area and subsequently deployed to Iraq in 2007. Its Soldiers are scheduled to return from deployment this fall.

"The arrival of 2SCR was truly a challenge because all personnel arrived from the U.S. in less than three months time," Boyle said. "As a result, many projects were completed after 2SCR arrived and some, such as barracks 'flagship facilities,'

"This time the Soldiers and their families are relocating in phases, allowing installation services to adjust to the rising population," Boyle said. With the addition of the 172nd, the number of assigned and associated personnel at the USAG Grafenwoehr is expected to climb to more than 35,000, triple what it was four years ago.

"Efficient Basing – Grafenwoehr" was based on the idea that Soldiers should train where they live. By moving the troops to the training area, the

camp. Twelve new barracks are being erected to house 154 Soldiers each, in the most modern Army-standard barracks.

"I have been impressed with all the new facilities, but particularly the quality of the barracks for Soldiers," Lt. Col. Eric Stetson, rear detachment commander for the recently arrived 172nd Infantry Brigade said.

The new barracks/company operations concept places all tactical and operational facilities in the company operations buildings, which



Paula Guzman



(Left photo) The new AAFES Shoppette has 24 gas pumps that replaced the older facility's four pumps. (Right) The existing health clinic was remodeled and expanded to also house the garrison's dental clinic.

were specifically undertaken after the Soldiers deployed. But we learned a lot from the 2SCR move and that is definitely an asset as we prepare for another brigade's arrival," he said.

In January 2008, it was announced that the 172nd Infantry Brigade would move to Grafenwoehr from Schweinfurt and replace the planned Theater Enabling commands. Within six months, more than 1,000 172nd Brigade Soldiers relocated to Grafenwoehr and the influx will continue as the unit trains and deploys just as 2SCR did 15 months ago.

Army saves money by avoiding transportation costs and using economies of scale on base support. It requires fewer people, and less energy and space to operate one base with twice the personnel as it does to operate two bases. Although Efficient Basing-Grafenwoehr has evolved into the Grafenwoehr half of the community, when the current plan is completed in 2010, the Grafenwoehr half will have 28 new company operations buildings located adjacent to the seven separate motor pools that form a border between the training area and the main

are located within the motor pools and not in the basement of the single-Soldier barracks.

"The Soldier walks into the company operations area, draws his weapon and his TA-50 from his NFL-style wall locker, goes out the back door, gets in his vehicle, drives onto the tank trail and goes to the range. When the mission is completed, the Soldier hits the wash rack, returns his weapons, puts his TA-50 back in his wall locker, and exits the company operations building before walking 50-150 meters to his barracks," Boyle



INCOM Europe PAO

The installation's new dining facility serves up to 1,800 meals daily.

is. Ninety percent of the homes in this 12-neighborhood community are filled or have been assigned to incoming families.

The Netzaberg complex surrounds the newly built elementary and middle schools that opened this fall.

The Child Development Center and Child and Youth Services are centrally located next to the Netzaberg schools. An AAFES shopette/gas station and a chapel will also be constructed in this complex.

The enhanced quality-of-life features that are now part of the USAG Grafenwoehr include the Army's largest PX and commissary facilities in Europe, Soldier barracks removed from unit operation/administrative areas, housing facilities built to host-nation standards, and a central campus-like environment for single Soldiers.

The old four-pump gas station has been replaced by a 24-pump station, and construction plans still include a new Army lodging facility nearby.

The Army post office/community mail room was modernized and expanded to accommodate the growing number of personnel. A new community support center is located right

said. "Because the Soldier is now located closer to his barracks or housing, he has more personal or family time."

According to the 172nd's Stetson, "Our Soldiers are enjoying the benefits of living close to the ranges they train on."

The new 830-unit housing complex, Netzaberg, located nearly two miles northwest of Grafenwoehr on the former racetrack, was designed and built to the latest specifications required by German and U.S. laws. Amenities include wall-to-wall carpeting, 110/220 electricity, appliances, a full basement, Armed Forces Network basic television and individual yards. Soldiers of all ranks live in

this village and the square footage of the homes exceeds Department of the Army standards for most grades.

"Netzaberg village is a remarkable achievement," Stetson said.

The look and feel is that of any upscale German neighborhood, which is precisely what this housing area

The 830-home military housing area, Netzaberg, was built for some of the thousands of troops that will arrive at Grafenwoehr as part of the U.S. Army's transformation in Europe. The community includes 11 home designs, featuring floor plans ranging from 1,300 to 1,900 square feet.



Susanne Bartsch

Grafenwoehr's physical fitness center features a gymnasium, indoor track, rock-climbing wall, and a variety of modern training equipment.

inside the main gate, and the vehicle-inspection point is across the street, so Soldiers can quickly accomplish their in-processing tasks without having to leave the area or drive to another building. The new Grafenwoehr physical fitness center is close to the barracks and Netzaberg housing.

In addition to the new construction at the USAG Grafenwoehr, virtually every building on post will undergo major renovation or conversion. USAREUR and 7th Army's Joint Multinational Training Command, the USAG Grafenwoehr's senior-tactical mission command, had elements scattered throughout the installation but now have a consolidated headquarters, as does the 69th Signal Battalion.

Other improvements to the garrison include enhancements to the training area, an expanded library, new dining facility, new roads and traffic circles, consolidation of the NCO Academy into a single complex and upgrades to the airfield.

For the Army, savings multiply when installations consolidate operations from another base, similar to what Grafenwoehr did with nearby Vilseck.

"The Vilseck side of the USAG Grafenwoehr continues to see construction and renovation for barracks, medical facilities and even a high-end sports store," Boyle said.

The consolidation has also helped promote the larger and better-stocked PX and commissary.

"The Grafenwoehr commissary is now open seven days a week, and the PX just added three additional registers," Boyle said.

The Water Tower, Grafenwoehr's historic landmark, features a large water tank, as well as a conference and training room.



rm Werbefotografie

Special events, such as concerts, tours, sports competitions and other MWR functions can be held more regularly at larger installations.

"We are actually looking at using our Deployment/Redeployment Center as an additional venue for large events," said Boyle.

For Grafenwoehr, the planning and implementation of transforming

the installation into what will be the largest Army base in Europe continues to evolve and improve. Officials believe that USAG Grafenwoehr, with two communities separated by a training area, is truly "Efficient Basing." **sm**

Kim Gillespie and Andy Spendlove works at the U.S. Army Garrison, Grafenwoehr Public Affairs Office.



Susanne Bartsch

Sentinels of

Keeping Watch Over America's Sentries



Freedom

Story by Carrie McLeroy

MIKE Conklin is a man on a mission. After one of his three Army Ranger sons was wounded in Iraq in 2003, he committed to do something palpable to help severely wounded servicemen and women. "I thought to myself, I can do more than put a yellow ribbon magnet on my car, and I should."

When Spc. Jake Brown, a friend of Conklin's middle son, was crushed by an Abrams tank while serving in Germany that same year, Conklin seized his opportunity to take action.

Brown was in a coma initially, and not expected to survive. He endured 26 operations, according to Conklin. "When he came back home, there was really nothing for him, and I kept asking myself, 'What is our responsibility as a community?'"

Conklin decided to do all he could to help Brown get back on his feet and make a successful transition from military to civilian life. He gathered a group of about 10 community leaders to include a doctor, lawyer, developers, builders and other professionals. "I told them that I wanted to help this member of our community, and I asked them to join me. This went from a one-man operation to a community program in 15 minutes." The

Sentinels of Freedom Foundation was born.

Conklin, who was a developer, builder and real estate broker in Danville, Calif., at the time, said every member of the group was ready to do whatever they could to assist Brown. They combined efforts and assets to provide Brown with rent-free, furnished housing, a vehicle and a job, and helped him begin his post-military education. Brown is currently a successful member of the United Parcel Service team in the California Bay Area, and will soon graduate from the University of California, Hayward.

"We just gave him a chance," Conklin said. "Ninety-nine percent of the water was carried by Jake Brown." Although the non-profit organization assists with job placement, it is up to the individual to apply and interview for positions within companies, just as any other job candidate would. They also must have, within themselves, the drive to succeed.

About two months after their initial meeting, Conklin gathered the group again, this time to thank them for their help. During lunch the question was raised, "Why couldn't we do this again, for someone outside

this community?" They all agreed to establish The Sentinels of Freedom as a sustaining, enduring scholarship program.

The Sentinels of Freedom Foundation began as a grassroots effort, "to provide life-changing opportunities for men and women of the U.S. armed forces who have suffered severe service-related injuries and need the support of grateful communities to realize their dreams," according to Conklin.

It provides four-year, "life scholarships," to men and women of the armed services whose wounds led to amputation, paraplegia, severe burns, blindness and/or deafness. According to Conklin, applicants must have a 60 percent disability rating from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Participation in the program is a four-year commitment for both the service members and the communities involved.

The foundation maintains a well-defined mission, according to Conklin. "There is no mission creep, and the requirements for participation are very clear," he said. The organization has set up a Web site, where those interested can learn more about the scholarship, supporting com-

Sentinels of Freedom



Mike Conklin is the founder and president of The Sentinels of Freedom Scholarship Foundation. The foundation provides four-year "life scholarships" to veterans who have been severely wounded since Sept. 11, 2001.



Sentinels of Freedom



Mike Conklin's sons, all Army Rangers, helped inspire him to establish The Sentinels of Freedom Scholarship Foundation. Dozens of Soldiers have been placed in the program over the past few years.

"We have succeeded so far, because entire communities have come forward to support our Sentinels."

munities and partners, as well as the individual Sentinels. Eligible men and women can also apply for scholarships through the site.

Conklin and his peers began reaching out to other communities and their leaders, and eventually established working relationships with the VA and the Defense Department. "We have asked for professional courtesies to help us place people," he said. "They have been golden with us and helped us take a proactive stance with each individual."

Scholarship recipients are called, "Sentinels," in honor of their sacrifice and commitment to guarding the nation's freedoms, according to Conklin. "Regardless of political affiliation or their feelings on the wars, communities are realizing the value of these individuals' service. We have a responsibility to them, and we're committed to accept that responsibility and provide assistance."

The foundation's scope has widened in recent months. There are currently two Sentinels in Arizona, three in Colorado, nine in California, and three others headed to Chicago, Wisconsin and Alabama.

Several corporations have joined Conklin in his endeavor, providing donations, jobs and other assistance, which have enabled the foundation to broaden its reach. Quest, Verizon, Cisco, AT&T, Chevron, Wells Fargo and UPS have all gotten involved.

Jones International University, the first fully online university in the U.S. to be granted regional accreditation, was named the Sentinels of Freedom's preferred provider of online education in August 2007. According to university representatives, JIU will be, "instrumental in assisting Sentinels in achieving not only their educational goals, but also their life goals."

In March 2007, REMAX International became one of the first national corporate sponsors, helping to grow the foundation at all levels, to include funding its entire overhead costs and housing its headquarters for more than a year.

According to Ronda Scholting, a REMAX public relations manager,

Sentinels of Freedom



Volunteers donate time, materials and services to make a "Sentinel's" transition from Army life to productive citizen easier.



The Sentinels of Freedom threw a reception for "Sentinel" Ben Crowley and his new wife Roshan to welcome her into the community.



the relationship between the foundation and REMAX is a natural one. "Mike Conklin was a REMAX broker at the time. He asked for a meeting with Dave Liniger, chairman and cofounder of REMAX, to see if there was any interest."

Scholting said that Liniger, a Vietnam veteran, remembered how veterans during that time were not welcomed home with open arms, and were often forgotten by their communities. "He saw a real need and wanted to help."

She went on to say that real estate and other professionals who make up support/mentor teams for Sentinels often have an extensive network of contacts within communities. "Most of these individuals aren't from the communities they are placed in, but they are looking for a fresh start. Instead of going into a community not knowing anyone, they now know a team of people who know everyone."

Amanda Okker, who works in the communications department at REMAX, said the company is honored to play such a major role, but credits the Sentinels themselves, communities, small businesses and other larger companies with the foundation's success so far. "REMAX is just one company helping. There are others working just as hard to contribute and make this work."

Although Conklin said the foundation has been effective due to

its grassroots approach, he admitted it would need additional corporate and community investments to continue to thrive.

"We are looking even more into corporate involvement," Conklin said. "If we can get companies to invest in one man or woman, we will find the right person (to be a Sentinel), and they will succeed."

The majority of Sentinels of Freedom communities are located in the western part of the country, according to Conklin, who said he hopes that communities in the east will be inspired to help as well.

"If a community wants to get involved, it has to prove it has the assets and resources available and the people in place to sustain scholarships for four years."

Conklin added it is not only vital that communities have a passion to get involved, but also a team of dedicated professionals in place with a plan to guide a Sentinel placed with them. "We won't create false hope or make false promises to these men and women."



There are training opportunities available for teams willing to devote the necessary time and effort, Conklin said. "We can send them training materials, provide advice and in some cases even match (portions of) funds donated by communities. We will work with communities ready to host a Sentinel."

The foundation hopes communities will welcome another 25 Sentinels in 2008. With continued support, Conklin said he believes the goal is attainable. "We are moving ahead with realistic, measured steps," he said. "We have succeeded so far, because entire communities have come forward to support our Sentinels."

Conklin and his compatriots continue to rally support for the Sentinels, and have set their sites not only on corporate America, but the U.S. government as well. "We are beginning to excite interest in Congress, and the governor of California has taken a personal interest in this, and rightfully so."

The Sentinels in the program are thriving, according to Conklin, because teams of volunteers helped carve niches in their communities for these wounded warriors, allowing them to regain their independence. "We are committed, long term, to helping communities across America support as many of these men and women as possible. One Sentinel, one victory at a time." **sm**

Veterans' Lives Changed

Story by Carrie McLeroy

NOBODY gives out a life. Ian Newland was certain of that, so when Mike Conklin sat down with him at a Denver restaurant to talk about a “life scholarship,” that would help him take care of his wife and two children, Newland was skeptical.

His doubts, like many veterans

in his position, stemmed from empty promises by well-intentioned individuals who could not imagine the challenges men and women face after being severely wounded while serving their country. Newland suffered countless shrapnel wounds throughout his body when a grenade exploded inside the Humvee he and

four other Soldiers were riding in near Adhamiyah, Iraq.

An Ohio native, he had heard from friends how beautiful the Colorado Springs, Colo., area was. He was ready for a change of scenery after existing in a haze of medical and administrative bureaucracies for months after returning to his head-



Ian Newland, left, and Chase Gean, shake hands with guests in the receiving line at Gean's "Welcome Home" event in Colorado.

by Grassroots Program



Mike Conklin, director of the Sentinels of Freedom Foundation, welcomes Ian Newland and his family to their new home.

quarters element in Germany. “They weren’t prepared to handle guys like me,” Newland said. His unit released him from duty, but red tape prevented him from returning to the U.S.

Newland insists his eventual meeting with Conklin, the national director of the Sentinels of Freedom Foundation, was the result of a series of miracles. He spoke with his wife, and together they decided he would travel to Fort Carson, Colo., to assess employment opportunities and housing options. “I pulled out all of my savings and bought a plane ticket

“They thought of everything,” Newland said. “From that moment on I knew life was going to be better. What has happened in my life is a living miracle.”

from Germany to Colorado,” he said, not sure what, if anything, he would find.

While at Fort Carson, Newland met with the civilian personnel director, anxious to proffer his military experience into a job, but walked out of the office without any guarantees. His efforts to find housing for his family met with resistance by lenders who would not accept his military pay on the loan application, citing that he was only months from discharge with no guarantee of future income.

Discouraged, Newland said he felt compelled to go to the chapel. “I was still limping and using a cane, still bandaged up when a man approached me outside the chapel and asked me if I was a Soldier wounded in Iraq,” he said. That man, Dennis McCormack, worked with the Army Wounded Warrior Program at Fort Carson. “He said he just got back from a meeting with a group of realtors and businessman who build scholarships for guys like me.”

McCormack took Newland to meet with Joe Clement at REMAX in

Colorado Springs and from his office, Newland spoke with Conklin for the first time. “I told him my story, how I hadn’t been finding much success, how I was broke and broken. He said, ‘I want you to come to Denver and meet with me.’” Clement arranged for a rental car, and Newland was on his way to Denver.

Even after their initial meeting, where Conklin described the details of the scholarship program, took copies of Newland’s medical records and exchanged contact information with him, the injured Soldier was still doubtful. “I thought, ‘If this is real, it would be like winning the lottery,’” he said. “But I still couldn’t trust it. I was looking for the fine print.”

Newland returned to Germany, uncertain what the future held for he and his family. On Father’s Day, while sitting with his wife at the computer, he broke down. “I just started crying. Our future was so uncertain. I felt like I was letting my family down,” he said. His wife suggested they pray for guidance.

“As we were praying, I kid you



Ben Crowley welcomes another "Sentinel" into the ranks. Crowley and other veterans have received "life scholarships" from The Sentinels of Freedom, a not-for-profit organization committed to helping severely wounded servicemembers transition from military to civilian life.

not, we heard, 'You've got mail,' from the computer." The message was from Mike Conklin, and it was the first of many Newland would receive. He had been awarded a Sentinels of Freedom scholarship.

Within weeks, he and his family were welcomed to the Denver area with a fully furnished home and car donated by supportive members of their new community. "They thought of everything," Newland said. "From that moment on I knew life was going to be better. What has happened in my life is a living miracle."

Chase Gean and Ben Crowley faced doubts similar to Newland's regarding the Sentinels of Freedom. "You get a lot of empty promises from people," Crowley said. "They are well-meaning, but when they get outside Walter Reed on Georgia

Avenue, those promises slip their minds."

Crowley was on patrol in Afghanistan when an improvised explosive device detonated, shattering both his legs. Doctors saved his left leg, but the right leg had to be amputated. While recovering and rehabilitating at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, he met a Department of Veterans Affairs representative who put him in contact with Conklin. "I was still skeptical. It wasn't until I actually received a job offer that I realized the program was for real."

Crowley now works as a project manager for Chevron. Although he is originally from Georgia, the California Bay Area community where he now lives welcomed him with open arms.

"They are some of the finest hu-

man beings I've ever known," Crowley said. "They welcomed me like a son, and told my parents, 'Don't worry about him. He's got a family out here too.'"

He added that one of the greatest strengths of the program is its grassroots nature, void of a standard, formalized process that ignores the individual. "I don't just think it's a great program, it is that. But the program's design is optimal – it is catered to your personal needs. Communities need to model their own programs after the Sentinels of Freedom."

Gean was wounded while on patrol in an Afghan village near the Pakistan border. Snipers attacked his unit, and he was hit in the back about a half-inch below his body armor. Although the bullet did not hit his spine, it severed nerves and caused swelling that left him paralyzed from the waist down. He, like Newland and Crowley, endured months of painful rehabilitation, eventually finding himself in limbo between his life as a Soldier and his future as a severely-wounded war survivor.

"You have a plan for what will happen if you die," Newland said. "But you never think, 'What if my legs or arms don't work.' You never consider that possibility."

The three men were forced to face the reality of their injuries, while at the same time coming to terms with the fact that they would no longer be Soldiers. Each had to determine a new direction for his life.

The Sentinels of Freedom Foundation was established to help men and women do just that. It provides four-year life scholarships to veterans



"This program has helped not only me, but other guys too," Gean said. "I know for a fact that if they didn't have the Sentinels of Freedom to give them a push, they wouldn't know what to do."

who have received severe, service-related injuries since Sept. 11, 2001. Applicants must have a 60 percent disability rating, and the injuries must have led to blindness, deafness, paraplegia, loss of limb and/or severe burns. "We exist to help them start the process of transitioning from the armed forces to becoming productive citizens," Conklin said.

The foundation relies on community teams made up of various business people, local leaders, community groups and other volunteers determined to help these "Sentinels," named in honor of their sacrifice and commitment to guarding America's freedoms. The support groups donate money, time, goods and services, housing, transportation and mentorship for as long as scholarship recipients need, up to four years.

Gean met Conklin through a mutual acquaintance who once worked with the Army's Wounded Warrior Program. He had recently moved to the Denver area to be near Craig Hospital, one of the top spinal cord injury rehabilitation and research centers in the world.

"I was told a little about the program and asked if I wanted to apply," he said. Gean filled out a detailed application and soon found himself face to face with Conklin. "Mike put me in contact with people at REMAX International. I filled out an application, interviewed and was hired in the membership department." Gean was accepted as a "Sentinel" and began receiving support immediately.

Volunteers from REMAX and various places within the community provided assistance. "Before we (Gean and his fiancé) were living in

an apartment that was not built for a wheelchair, and we were an hour from the office," he said. They now live in a home (rent free for four years) much closer to work that has been modified for wheelchair accessibility. He was also given a truck, specially catered to his needs.

Gean, who plans to start college once treatments at Craig Hospital help manage his pain, said his team has not only helped on the housing and job fronts, but provided other guidance as well. "They have even helped me get my benefits. They show us the way, we just have to walk down the path."

Each Sentinel agreed that their lives were forever changed by the efforts of Conklin and the community teams. At times they struggle to understand how they deserve those efforts. "I chose to join the Army and serve my country, and I can believe I earned my awards and promotions," Newland said. "But I didn't understand how I earned this."

With the help of their families, friends and support teams, each veteran, and almost a dozen others like them, are building new lives. "This program has helped not only me, but other guys too," Gean said. "I know for a fact that if they didn't have the Sentinels of Freedom to give them a push, they wouldn't know what to do."

Each person helped is a living testament to the success of the Sentinels of Freedom, and each feels compelled to communicate the foundation's mission to anyone who will hear it.

"Mike Conklin and the Sentinels of Freedom need national support – there should be billboards on high-

ways across America promoting it," Newland said. "Americans should support the men and women fighting for them. They should get out and support these organizations that do so much, expecting nothing in return. It's not enough that they just know about this. They should be willing to do anything they can to support it."

The Sentinels of Freedom offered Ian Newland, Chase Gean, Ben Crowley and other severely wounded veterans a chance, one that Mike Conklin said they earned. The organization also proved to them that there are people willing to help, people who appreciate the sacrifices they have made.

"This experience has shown me that there are people who care," Newland said. "We volunteered to defend this country so others don't have to. My peers are dying, and this has shown that they're not dying in vain."

To find out more about the Sentinels of Freedom Foundation, go to www.sentinelsoffreedom.org. **sm**





The USNS Pillaa, a large, medium-speed Roll-on/Roll-off Ship, supported JLOTS 2008 exercise Pacific Strike, a joint exercise of the U.S. military's ability to transfer war fighting and humanitarian equipment to shore from ships at sea. The Pillaa transported the U.S. Army's 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and 45th Sustainment Brigade, 8th Theater Sustainment Command equipment from Hawaii to Camp Pendleton, Calif., for reception, staging and movement to the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif.

Sgt. Stephen L. Proctor



The Navy Elevated Causeway System is one of many pieces of equipment that served as part of the improvised port during Joint Logistics Over the Shore 2008. The crane on the ELCAS lifts the vehicles and containers from the lighterage and smaller ships and provides a conduit to the shore.

Soldiers, Sailors Train 'Over the Shore'

Story by Elizabeth M. Collins

FOR a few weeks in July, hundreds of Army trucks, Humvees and other vehicles continually rolled through the Pacific surf and onto the beach at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

The vehicles and their drivers were participating in Joint Logistics Over the Shore, a joint training exercise involving landing and transporting vehicles without a fixed

port. About 2,500 servicemembers participated, including a 50-50 ratio of Soldiers and Sailors, many reserve-component, as well as about 50 Marines.

Their mission was to move about 1,800 pieces of equipment from the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., in preparation for the unit's upcoming deployment

to Iraq.

"In the war plans that we've got for the United States military, JLOTS plays an important role," said Maj. Gen. Raymond V. Mason, commander of the personnel performing the exercise, known as Joint Task Force 8, as well as the 8th Theater Sustainment Command. "It's a strategic roll. The ability to move large amounts of forces behind an enemy to a strategic

geographical location, perhaps behind the enemy lines where the enemy doesn't suspect it, because there's no port there and all of a sudden we're able to get in behind the enemy and change the tide of a battle."

He added that the operation can also be used in humanitarian situations, such as when a tsunami or hurricane destroys a port and the military needs to quickly get a lot of relief supplies to a location.

According to the commander, it was the largest JLOTS ever in terms of personnel and equipment – the exercise has been taking place for about 15 years in different locations, sponsored by different combatant commands.

In the planning stages since November 2007, this year's JLOTS, "Pacific Strike," kicked off June 12 when Navy Seabees began construction of a large base camp, complete with hundreds of tents, a post exchange, barber shop and even a Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility.

The Seabees went on to construct a 1,200-foot pier in just two weeks. A 24-foot wide elevated causeway stretched out into the ocean like any pier, but was wide enough to act as a two-lane road for trucks and other vehicles, although according to Navy Lt. Atiim Senthill, drivers had to stay to the left so they could see the ocean below.

A huge turn-table and crane assisted in unloading large containers from small ships called lighters and loading trucks, which moved the containers to the shore.

"It's like building a bridge that



A Navy-operated amphibious vehicle transports Soldier drivers to their vehicles aboard a roll-on, roll-off landing craft during Joint Logistics Over the Shore 2008 at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

you see across a river with the ability to turn that bridge around and download vehicles," explained Lt. Col. Rod Honeycutt, chief of operations for JTF 8.

"It's the only system like this in the world. There's not another ELCAS," said Senthill, the ELCAS officer in charge.

In a real-life situation, he said, the pier would be able to stay up indefinitely if properly maintained, as long as the weather and sea didn't cause any damage.

Nature, officials said, can be a huge factor. They learned this from experience as the sea damaged a second, roll-on, roll-off pier, called the Trident Pier, and rendered it unusable for the exercise.

Small craft also ferried vehicles from the

roll-on, roll-off U.S. Navy Ship Pililaau to the beach. An amphibious vehicle carrying Soldier drivers met the craft and Soldiers drove the Humvees and trucks onto the beach.

"Soldiers are motivated," said Staff Sgt. Brandon Anderson, a transportation noncommissioned officer.

Elizabeth M. Collins

Soldiers roll up a pump hose during Joint Logistics Over the Shore 2008 at Camp Pendleton, Calif. During the joint exercise, which occurs on different installations several times a year, representatives of various occupational fields from several military branches combine efforts to transfer equipment and personnel ashore.

"Everyone's having a great time. We don't get these missions very often to come out to the beach in beautiful weather and get paid for it, so we're happy to do our job."

"Just hope you don't get stuck," said Spc. Joseph Synor, one of the drivers. "Where the ramp's out now, it's deep. You've got to go fast. If you don't go fast, you get stuck."

A number of the vehicles did get stuck, but other heavy equipment was on hand to tow them out of the water to a chorus of catcalls from the shore.

Synor's next stop was the Receipt, Staging and Onward facility, where about 300 Soldiers prepared the vehicles and other equipment for convoys to Fort Irwin by both commercial and military trucks. Many of the drivers, according to 1st Lt. David Goforth, would have made three or four convoys by the time all the equipment was due at Fort Irwin Aug. 3.

It involved "lots of coordination and organization, making sure the Soldiers are in the right place and that they know their job," said Goforth. "Lots of training and practice to make sure everything's done right and nobody gets hurt."

The exercise gave him an opportunity to learn new jobs and he said he's been especially impressed by his first exposure to the Navy.

"I think it's absolutely amaz-



Sgt. Stephen L. Proctor

Soldiers with the 331st Transportation Company from Fort Eustis, Va., "stab" the beach with the Army Trident Pier during Joint Logistics Over the Shore 2008. The Trident Pier is a floating causeway that allows Soldiers and Sailors to move rolling stock and shipping containers from ships anchored at sea onto the shore using an improvised port.

ing and I think it's really good for the military in general to do operations such as this, to work with other branches of service," said Goforth. "We're all in the military, but we don't usually work together. The Navy has been great. Anytime I needed assistance with anything, they've been a big help."

That joint effort was key, said Mason.

"I think the Soldiers and Sailors who are involved in this, number one, want to recognize the capabilities that are out there. That's important, just being knowledgeable about that, particularly at the leadership level.

Down at the Soldier and Sailor level, it's that the Army and Navy can get together and work as a team and put in a great capability like JLOTS and bring combat power to bear," he said.

"The United States military has great young men and women in it that can make something like this, with as many moving pieces that are out there, and all that complicated piece, and make it happen. It's just a great team effort," Mason said. "It really gives a workout to the Army and Navy folks out here to get all the equipment off the ships and across the shore. What we're doing right now is as real as it gets." **sm**

Soldiers move equipment onto flatbed trucks for transport to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. Soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division trained with the equipment before deploying to Iraq.



Elizabeth M. Collins





Before an emergency, know the way to safety.

Every minute counts in an emergency. Plan your evacuation.

- Put important documents in an emergency kit.
- Carry emergency contact information with you at all times.
- Pick a place to meet your family if you are separated.
- Consider pets in your evacuation planning.

It's up to you. Prepare Strong.





KIDS!

An activity, event and resource guide especially designed for kids and their parents or guardians to help them learn more about emergency preparedness.

Be Prepared In Every Situation

Every day, you make sure that you get your homework done, get to music or sports practice on time or plan where and when you'll meet up with friends.

But, do you know how to plan and prepare for emergencies? Put your planning skills to good use and work with your parents or guardians so you can be ready for all types of emergencies!

Use this activity sheet to help get you started! It's fun, full of useful information, and you can save it to practice what you've learned.

Kit Word Spy

Words that remind us of basic items that should be in your family's Emergency Supplies Kit are hidden in the block below. Some words are hidden backward, forward, up, down, or diagonally. See if you can find them!

WATER
FIRST AID KIT
WHISTLE
FLASHLIGHT

BABY
FOOD
BATTERIES
MULTITOOL

M	A	T	T	R	I	R	D	T	L	T
U	I	F	E	O	E	J	I	L	I	A
L	O	I	D	A	B	L	D	R	W	E
D	T	E	N	W	H	F	D	S	A	A
F	L	A	S	H	L	I	B	F	T	T
S	I	O	N	B	A	T	A	W	E	T
T	O	O	A	T	M	G	L	R	R	E
B	A	I	S	O	S	O	S	A	O	R
H	L	R	I	R	E	L	T	B	A	I
E	I	R	I	W	F	I	S	T	E	E
F	W	T	D	O	O	E	H	W	E	S

Get Ready Now Make a Kit!

An Emergency Supplies Kit contains basic items that you and your family would need to stay safe during and after a disaster or an emergency. Emergency Supplies Kit items should be stored in a waterproof container as close as possible to your home's exit door. Make sure everyone in the family knows where the Kit is located!

Talk to your family about why it's important to have an Emergency Supplies Kit. Then put together a Kit with your family that contains these basic items:

- Water—at least one gallon per person per day for at least three days
- Food—nonperishable food for at least three days
- Multitool
- Whistle
- First aid kit
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio with cell phone charger and extra batteries
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Local map, your family emergency plan, cash in local currency and other important documents enclosed in a waterproof container
- Personal sanitation supplies such as moist towelettes, garbage bags and ties
- Additional items for your family's unique needs such as infant food, diapers, prescription medications and pet essentials
- Books, games, puzzles, toys or other fun activities

For a list of items to build a complete Emergency Supplies Kit, visit www.ready.gov



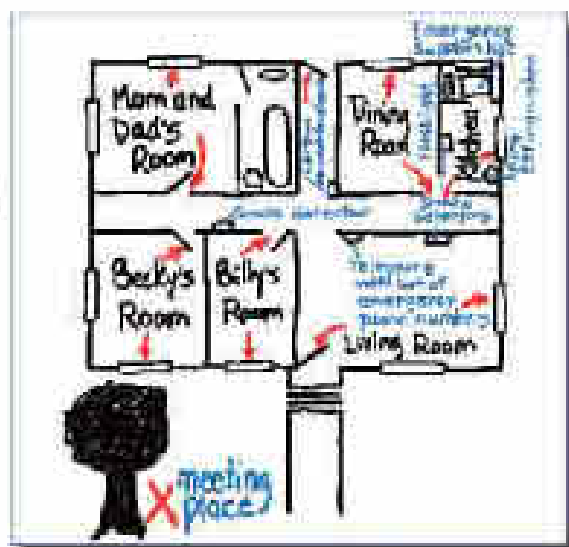


KIDS!

Help Make a Plan with your parents!

It's important to know where things are located inside your house to help you prepare or stay safe during an emergency.

1. Have your parents help you use the space provided to draw a simple picture of your home.
2. Draw arrows pointing to at least TWO exits out of every room (e.g., door, window).
3. Mark the locations of the following items in your home:
 - Doors
 - Windows
 - Emergency supplies kit
 - Telephone with list of emergency phone numbers
 - Flashlight
 - Fire alarm or smoke detectors
 - Fire extinguisher
 - Carbon monoxide alarm
4. Pick a safe place (outside your home) for your family's meeting place and mark it with an 'X'.



Blank space for drawing a floor plan and marking exits and emergency items.

Be Informed!



There are many ways you can learn more about emergency planning and preparedness!

1. Talk to your parents, guardians or teacher about disasters that may occur in your area and how they can help you be prepared.
2. Have fun and learn at the same time! Go to the kid-friendly web sites listed below for preparedness activities and games.
3. Practice makes perfect. If you and your family practice your emergency plan at least two times a year, you will be ready.

Kid-Friendly Preparedness Web Sites:

www.ready.gov/kids

This web site features age-appropriate, step-by-step instructions on what kids and their families can do to become better prepared for all kinds of emergencies.

www.fema.gov/kids

An online resource for kids that includes preparedness games, stories and safety information.

www.readykids.org/services/youth/care

Engage kids in emergency preparedness and disaster safety with games, quizzes and map.

www.spokey.org/index.html

Learn about fire safety and prevention by helping solve Spooky the Fire Dog's secret code.

www.noaa.gov/em/education/kidspage.shtml

Designed to help kids learn about hurricanes, winter storms, thunderstorms and other hazardous weather. Check out the category called "Other Fun Stuff" to find interesting activities.

Recommended Preparedness Books:

In addition to online resources, you can also go to your local library and check out these books to learn more about safety and preparedness for all types of emergencies!



**It's Time to Call 911:
What to Do in an
Emergency**
by The Pension Overseas



**Important People Say:
Learn How to Call
9-1-1**
by Mary Koski (Author),
Lori Collins (Author),
Don Brown (Illustrator)



**Stop, Drop and Roll
(A Book about Fire
Safety)**
by Margery Cuyler
(Author), Arthur Howard
(Illustrator)



**I Can Be Safe! A Fire
Look at Safety**
by Pat Thomas (Author),
Lesley Harter
(Illustrator)



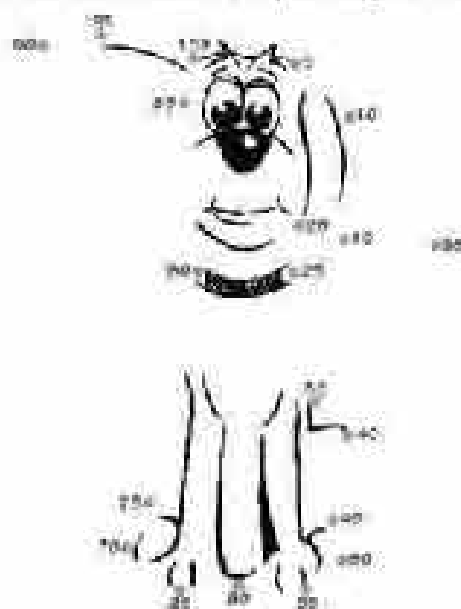
KIDS!

Pet Emergency Planning! Don't forget about your family Pet!

- Prepare a list of family, friends, boarding facilities, veterinarians and pet-friendly hotels that could shelter your pet in an emergency.
- Assemble a Pet Emergency Supply Kit (visit www.ready.gov for tips).
- Make sure your pet has proper identification tags.
- Include copies of your proof of ownership in your Family Emergency Supplies Kit.



Go Dot-to-Dot with Fido, the family dog! Start with the number 5, count by fives and go dot-to-dot.



Get a Kit
Make a Plan
Be Informed

Remember to add photos of your dog(s). Don't forget to add to your Emergency Supplies kit.

Emergency Contacts:

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Important Phone Numbers:

Fire

Police

Ambulance

Veterinarian

(202) 844-6811 (U.S. emergency)

Other emergency numbers: _____

Your neighborhood meeting place: _____

Other important information: _____

Now that you know more ... Get Involved!

Share what you've learned about emergency preparedness to others. Here are some ways you can give back to your community and help others to better prepared.

- Contact your local Red Cross to sign up for life-saving training classes such as First Aid and CPR (<http://www.redcross.org/schools/volunteer/>).
- Volunteer, make donations or adopt a pet at your local animal shelter or Humane Society organization (<http://www.hhs.org/>).
- Talk to your parents, teachers or school administrators about other ways you can make a difference.

Visit www.kidsworld.org/ReadyKIDS_KH. **Hill no pet left behind app** to learn how kids from Hazlet, New Jersey hosted a special party that helped raise money and pass the PETS Act, a new U.S. law that ensures no pets are left behind when disasters strike.



Iraqi Children's Art

Story and Photo by Spc. Joseph Rivera Rebolledo

IRAQI children between the ages of two and 12 were recently invited to Forward Operating Base War Eagle to showcase their artistic skills and creativity by painting the concrete walls that surround the installation.

The children live in a village near War Eagle and walk by the walls daily on their way to school, said Capt. Megan Welch, a logistics officer with the 4th Infantry Division's 64th Brigade Support Battalion, adding that the children find the route to school to be a safer way to get there.

The focus of the painting session was to establish a rapport with the adults and younger residents of the village, and provide an opportunity for the children to beautify something

they see daily, Welch said.

This is one more effort Multi-National Division Baghdad Soldiers are undertaking to foster a solid relationship with the residents of the village and other Iraqi communities, said Welch. Additionally, the art project allowed the Iraqi children to see the Soldiers as people they can interact with.

The children painted Iraqi and American flags, palm trees, flowers, hearts and other designs.

"The kids who



Two Iraqi girls celebrate after adding their creations to the wall. The structure borders a path leading from the children's village to their school.

Young Iraqi "artists" pose in front of their artwork after a day spent painting walls at Forward Operating Base War Eagle in northern Baghdad.



participated had a good time and, for us, it was a good opportunity to interact with them," said Capt. Walter Zurkowsky, executive officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

Welch and her fellow Soldiers organized the day's events and said they hope to host similar activities in the future.

"We had a lot of fun with the kids. It was a good, cooperative, community-building event, and we look forward to seeing many of these in the future," Welch said. **sm**

Spc. Joseph Rivera Rebolledo is assigned to the 4th Inf. Div.'s 3rd BCT, MND-B Public Affairs Office.

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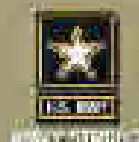
GRAT

GROUND RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

<https://crc.army.mil/grat>



The Ground Risk Assessment tool is designed to aid in mitigating risk by reinforcing the five-step composite risk management process and providing users with potential accident hazards and controls. Using this tool in concert with the military decision-making process will help Army leaders achieve success in their missions and make safety an integral part of their planning. Visit the USACRC Web site today and try it out for yourself.



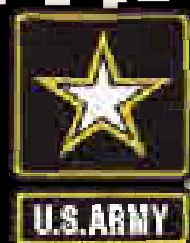
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